A STUDY OF LIGEIA

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この小論は，Poeが最高の想像力の所産であり従って最大傑作と自認した“Ligeia”の研究で，三部から成立つ.

第一部ではPoeの想像力説を，A. W. Schlegelの影響のもとに形成されたものと，Coleridgeの衣鉢をついだものとに区分して考究した. 因にPoeはその想像力観に於いてColeridgeと意見を異にしたとみる学説に対して，PoeはColeridgeの説を継承したことを明らかにしようとした.

第二部は“Ligeia”の本文について筆者流の“explication des textes”を試みたものである.

第三部は“Ligeia”の執筆動機をPoeの“spiritual need”にもとめ，その潜在主題は霊魂の来世に於ける存在への自己催眠にあり，この努力は失敗に帰したこと，又“Morrella”等も“Ligeia”とその潜在主題に於いて連関性をもつ一連の作品系列に属することを主張した.

I

THE place that Poe himself gave to “Ligeia” of all his prose writings is evident from a letter sent to E. V. A. Duyckinck in 1846, eight years after its appearance in the *American Museum*, September 1838. “Ligeia,” Poe wrote, “is undoubtedly the best story I have written.”[1] A further corroboration of this appraisal is a letter which he wrote to J. R. Lowell in 1845. Of all his letters, many of which were penned for “effect,” this one to Lowell claims a significant place in his correspondence because here he opened his heart to a congenial poet. Near the end of this letter, reference is made to his best tales, of which “Ligeia” comes first, succeeded by “The Gold Bug,” “The Murders in the Rue Morgue,” “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Black Cat,” “William Wilson,” “The Descent into the Maelstroem” in the order mentioned.[2]

The love and confidence with which Poe regarded this favorite child of his elicited the following remark from Mr. Philip Lindsay. He says, "That he (Poe) preferred this (Ligeia) above all his other stories shows that it meant to him something deeply personal."[3] The English critic sees in Ligeia "an image of his mother," and in the story "an allegory of betrayal and of love and hate combined with death."[3] His judgement, as is too often the case with those critics of psychoanalytic bent, seems to force facts into the Procrustean bed of preconceived ideas.

Poe's own reason for his preference is given in a letter addressed to P. P. Cooke in 1846. "The loftiest kind," he declares, "is that of the highest imagination — and for this reason only 'Ligeia' may be called my *best* tale."[4]

Now the trouble with the word "Imagination" is that it is of Protean character which admits of different senses in different contexts. Among Poe's contemporaries J. R. Lowell finds "a wonderful fecundity of imagination,"[5] as Mrs. H. Whitman detects "the weird splendors of his imagination"[6] in his writings. The same characteristic attracted the notice of Dostoievsky, the Russian novelist, whose comment on Poe reads in part, "Moreover, there exists one characteristic that is singularly peculiar to Poe, and which distinguishes him from every other writer, and that is the vigor of his imagination."[7] In spite of the unanimity of all three of these critics in regarding "Imagination" as one of his distinguishing marks, one cannot but be reminded, after all, of Dr. Herbert Read's remark that "imagination is the most dangerous word in our critical vocabulary."[8]

In comparison with the above-mentioned critics, Baudelaire is more specific. He says:

> Pour lui, l'imagination est la reine des facultés; mais par ce mot il entend quelque chose de plus grand que ce qui est entendue par le commun de lecteurs ··· L'imagination est une faculté quasi divine qui perçoit tout d'abord, en dehors des méthodes philosophiques, les rapports intimes et secrets des choses, les correspondances et les analogies.[9]

The French poet-critic was quite right in calling Poe's imagination "the queen of faculties," which, according to Poe, was "the soul of poetry"[10] or "that primary and most indispensable of all poetic requisites."[11] Baudelaire, however, seems to have been a little off the track when he described it as "an almost divine faculty

which perceives immediately and without philosophical methods the inner and secret relations of things, the correspondences and the analogies." For Baudelaire's view, an echo of Swedenborg, presupposes that externals are all linked with the one spiritual reality of the universe, all of them standing in some relation to each other. This conception would seem to make Poe a true-born Swedenborgian which he was not. It is ironic to note that in Baudelaire's view Poe stands out as a comrade of Emerson who scoffed at his rival as a "jingle man." It seems to me that Baudelaire here deviates from his customary role of a faithful exponent of Poe's view of literature.

What, then, is "Imagination" as conceived by Poe himself? Living up to his remark that "imagination is a faculty to be first considered in all criticism upon poetry," [12] he almost invariably used it as a yardstick for measuring the stature of a poem, or for that matter of a "tale proper."

Here is an example from his criticism of R. H. Horne's "Orion" on which he lavished unstinted praises. Indeed such was his admiration for the passages containing the description of the palace which Orion built for Hephaestos that he went so far as to declare that the description of Hell in Paradise Lost "was *altogether* inferior ··· to these unparalleled passages." [13] This evoked a scathing comment from J. M. Robertson that "It could not have emanated from a rational brain." [14]

No fair-minded critic would deny that in this appraisal Poe was carried away by his enthusiasm and blinded by his prejudice against a long poem. Nevertheless, he was quite "rational" and had his own reasons, and cogent ones for his eulogy. It was because "*its imagination ··· is of the most refined — the most elevating — the* most august character." [15] Particular attention of the reader is called by him to the description of Orion as "the hunter of shadows, he himself a shade." [16] According to Poe this is made "symbolical, or suggestive ··· of the speculative character of Orion, and occasionally, of his pursuit of visionary happiness." [17]

This kind of writing in which one finds the "upper-current" and "under-current" of meaning is allegory, the under-current being what is called a moral. The meaning, when restricted in its application to a certain part, will give rise to metaphor as

defined by Fenollosa.*

Now there would seem to have existed in Poe's mind two conflicting ideas about "allegory." One was an antipathy to what is obvious, which, he considered, repelled the artistic eye because of a certain hardness or nakedness in spite of a vivid array of incidents.[18] His dislike of what is not suggestive stems from his belief that it "not only demands no reflection, but repels it or dissipates it."[19] This importance which he attaches to reflection is based, in its turn, on the view that the idiosyncrasy of books is "*thought* in contradistinction from *deed*."[20] At the same time, however, there existed in Poe an inclination which was opposed to allegory as such. He had a dislike for allegory because it preached a moral, destroyed unity of effect, and did vital injury to verisimilitude.[21] The compromise was naturally sought in the borderland "where the suggested meaning runs through the obvious one in a very profound under-current so as never to interfere with the upper one without our own volition, so as never to show itself unless *called* to the surface ..."[22]

This class of composition which Poe called "mystic" after A. W. Schlegel[23] is a product of imagination. It was quite natural that the "mystic" element should form an integral part of his writings, most of which were oblique expressions of "the horrors of the soul," or rather the horrors of his own soul.

There is another view of his "Imagination," to which Poe was indebted to Coleridge. It is found in a review of Moore's "Alciphron" which he contributed to the January number of the *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* in 1840. Poe writes:

> "The fancy," says the author of the 'Ancient Mariner,' in his 'Biographia Literaria,' "the fancy combines, the imagination creates." And this was intended, and has been received, as a distinction. If so at all, it is one without a difference; without even a difference of *degree*. The fancy as nearly creates as the imagination; and neither creates in any respect. All novel conceptions are merely unusual combinations.[24]

On the dogmatic assumption that Coleridge's creation is creation *ex nihilo*, he contends, under the somewhat dubious authority of Baron de Bielfeld, that the mind

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* 'the use of material images to suggest immaterial relations' Quoted by H. Read, *English Prose Style*, p. 23.

of man can imagine nothing which has not really existed.[25] Dr. J. P. Pritchard regrets that Poe did not round out his position with regard to this disagreement with Coleridge.[26] It would seem to me, however, that Poe differed only to differ, prompted by his perverted sense of pride. In the first place, he does not quote Coleridge verbatim, nor is there any reference made to his distinction of Primary and Secondary Imagination. In the second place, in the passage just following the one quoted above, he stresses the intrinsic difference between Imagination and Fancy in such a way as if it were his own invention instead of Coleridge's. Another indication that he did not differ materially from Coleridge but followed him in his view of imagination is to be found in his review of "Culprit Fay and Other Poems." "Imagination," says Poe, "is possibly in man, a lesser degree of the creative power in God." [27] Again in an article on N. P. Willis, he took the position that was later taken by such great names as Drs. I. A. Richards and Basil Willey against eminent scholars like Professors Lascelles Abercrombie and J. L. Lowes. He says:

> The pure imagination chooses, from either beauty or deformity, only the most combinable things hitherto uncombined; the compound, as a general rule, partaking in character of sublimity or beauty in the ratio of the respective sublimity and beauty combined, which are themselves still to be considered as atomic — that is to say, as previous combinations. But, as often analogously happens in physical chemistry, so not unfrequently does it occur in this chemistry of intellect, that the admixture of two elements will result in something that shall have nothing of the quality of one of them — or even nothing of the qualities of either.[28]

Dr. Pritchard contends that Poe courted "logical disaster," for, according to the professor, what Poe terms "atomic" is Coleridge's "fixities and definites," with which fancy deals.[29] Indeed Poe was not careful enough, but there is no denying his belief in Imagination. For he plainly admits that the harmonious combination of the units of the separable meaning in the crucible of imagination will result in an organic unity through the process of assimilation, modification and fusion. In this connection it is curious to note the similarity of Poe's illustrative use of physical chemistry to that of Professor Basil Willey in his exposition of Coleridge's Imagination and Fancy.[30] Poe of "Longfellow War" notoriety might accuse the great scholar of plagiarism.

Now, what is important in the organic unity realized through novel combinations is the novelty of effect, which, Poe says, is best attained by avoiding rather than by seeking the absolute novelty of combination. The reason is that it leaves the reader with embarrassment, and in some cases causes pain at his own folly in not having himself hit upon the idea.[31] It invites our special attention that this contention which he made in 1842 gave way to his belief in absolute novelty in 1846. The apparent contradiction, however, does not mean any change in his view of imagination, but stems from an alteration of his spiritual need, which will be treated in Part III of the present paper. Here suffice it to say that when he came to turn to "sleep" and "mesmerism" in his probe into the mysteries of life and death, he saw "fancies" and "visions" where the confines of the waking world blended with the world of dreams. The conclusion that "the ecstasy consequent upon them is of a character supernal to the human nature — is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world ···" was reached because "the delight experienced has, as its element, but the absoluteness of novelty." This absoluteness of novelty, Poe asserted, if it was to be "ideal,"* should be so skillfully adapted to the surrounding circumstances as not to offend the reader's sense of fitness.[32] In other words, it was to be so handled as to give a sense of verisimilitude. Here again Poe shows himself a disciple of Coleridge who saw in Imagination the power of changing "the potential into the actual," or the possible into the real.

And "Ligeia" was a work of the highest imagination in that it was not only "ideal" but also it was imaginative in both Schlegelian and Coleridgian sense of the word.

II

In the following "explication des textes," "Ligeia" will be divided in five acts from the nature of its construction. Act 1 ends with the description of the heroine who quotes, as she dies, the passage in Glanvill. The curtain rises on Act 3 with

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* The word "ideal" was interchangeable with "imaginative" in Poe's critical terminology. One example is "An ideal or imaginative poem ···" (Poe's Works edited by J. H. Ingram, Vol. 4, p. 367.)

"About the commencement of the second month." "One night, near the closing in of October" marks the beginning of Act 4, which ends with "the hands of her menials prepared her for the tomb."

Ligeia*, which D. H. Lawrence calls "a mental-derived name,"[33] is actually one of the sirens in Greek mythology, meaning a sweet-voiced one. The name would seem to have been chosen partly from "the almost magical melody of her low voice," but more specifically for the sense of unreality which is evoked by a fictitious name. The same device is used with similar effect in "Ulalume."

Now every student of Poe is well acquainted with his pet theory that if the very initial sentence does not tend to bring out "a certain unique or single effect" a literary artist has failed in his first step.[34] The effect, which in this story is apparently that of "the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical,"[35] is more enhanced by the narrator's ignorance of the paternal name of the heroine. It must be noted, in this connection, that every device is used to whet curiosity and arouse imagination on the part of the reader. Dr. Mabbott suggests that "the hero's ignorance of Ligeia's family name means that she was Jewish, but an even more subtle explanation would be that, unlike Morrela, Ligeia revealed her true name to no one."[36]

The general tone being determined, a minute description of the heroine ensues. Mme. Bonaparte, "a friend and pupil" of Freud,[37] who is apparently determined to see Elizabeth Arnold in the heroine, calls the reader's attention to "the raven-black, the glossy, the luxuriant and *naturally-curling tresses*" setting forth the full force of the Homeric epithet, "hyacinthine," and "*the gentle prominence of the regions above the temples*" as the description which conforms most obviously to the medallion that depicts Poe's mother.[38]

Now, if Elizabeth Arnold had "naturally-curling tresses," it was by no means peculiar to the actress, and the adjective "raven black," which the French critic

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* In 'Al Aaraaf' Poe writes, "Ligeia! Ligeia! / My beautiful one! / Whose harshest idea / Will to melody run."

deliberately ignores, would weaken, if not invalidate, her assertion. As for the epithet "hyacinthine," it is almost invariably used by Poe in the description of the hair of a beautiful woman. In "To Helen" we find "Thy hyacynth hair, thy classic face," and the heroine of "The Assignation" has a "classical head, in curls like those of the young hyacinth." With regard to "the gentle prominence," a more convincing as well as important reason would seem to be found in phrenological lore in Poe's day, according to which it signified "love of life." A subtle anticipation of "her wild desire for life!"

More important than all this is the description of her eyes which are, "even fuller than the fullest of the gazelle eyes of the valley of Nourjahad." D. H. Lawrence's rather sarcastic remark [39] in connection with this portrayal would seem to be pointless in view of the fact that what Poe is aiming at is the suggestion of a certain under-current of meaning as well as of strangeness which the narrator finds in the expression, and not the realistic description of her eyes.

Poe's letter to Mrs. Whitman will cast a light on a better understanding of the hidden meaning of Ligeia's eyes. "The poem,"* he writes, "which I sent you contained all the events of a dream ··· observe the *eyes* in both tale and poem." [40] Turning to the poem, we find the eyes described in the last three lines.

> While even in the meridian glare of day
> I see them (eyes) still ··· two sweetly scintillant
> Venuses, unextinguished by the sun! [41]

Here Mrs. Whitman's eyes are identified with Venuses, and consequently with Beauty and Love — Love that will never die. Since Poe made a clear distinction between the Uranian and the Dionaean Venus,[42] he plainly referred, in this poem, to *Aphrodite urania* as spiritualized by Plato**. As in "To Helen," so in "Ligeia" her eyes are symbols. They stand for her ideal Beauty and her undying Love for

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* "To Helen" composed in 1848.

** Poe's letter to Mrs. Whitman will throw a side light on this question. He wrote in part, "But ··· believe that I truly, *truly* love you, and that it is the most spiritual of love that I speak ···" (Quinn, E. A. Poe, P. 576.)

the hero. In addition her large eyes symbolize her gigantic volition. This great will of hers combines with her profound love for the narrator to produce "her wild desire for life." And it was quite natural that the expression of her eyes should be identified with this desire for life. It is for this reason that the contemplation of the beautiful, strange and enigmatic, as well as the reading of a passage in Glanvill with reference to a gigantic will, never fails to inspire him with the sentiment aroused by her large and luminous eyes. Though the narrator feels he is approaching the full knowledge of their expression it will not quite be his, till it is finally gone. This is a subtle device of stirring "reflection" on the part of the reader, which is not resolved until the end of the story.

The explanation given by Mme. Bonaparte about the eyes is this. "Poe," says she, "was mistaken in supposing that he desired 'a full knowledge of the expression' of those eyes. What he really wished to recover was his knowledge of their identity; that of her to whom they had belonged." In her effort to justify her contention, she adds, "The psychic emphasis has been displaced from recognition of an *identity* to recognition of an *expression* of the eyes, in obedience to the mechanism of *displacement,* characteristic of the neurotic return of repressed material."[43] So many men, so many minds. But how convenient and dangerous a weapon this "displacement" theory seems to those uninitiated into the intricacies of psychoanalysis!

As Ligeia is perfect in her personal beauty, so is she a giant in her intellectual attainments. Mr. Hervey Allen's comment in connection with this is that "Ligeia, the strange mental opposite of Virginia and her prototype, had arisen to give him ghostly comfort in the barren cave of his marriage ··· All of these were to compensate him in the realm of dreams."[44] This criticism is indeed a penetrating one, but another interpretation would be that Poe is projecting himself in the heroine and is intimating that neither intellectual acumen nor profound learning in moral philosophy could quiet the persistent fear of annihilation.

"The Conqueror Worm," which the heroine tells him to repeat, was originally published in *Graham's Magazine* in 1843. This poem, counted by Poe among his best,[45] consists of five stanzas which may well be symbolical of the acts of a tragedy. The lines are quite characteristic of Poe with thrilling depictions of men at the

mercy of Fate, the vanity of human life, the ghastly portrayal of Death in the fourth stanza. It is a pity that the final stanza should have fallen to a prosaic allegory of which he was so loud in condemnation. According to Professor Quinn the worm symbolizes the Serpent or the spirit of evil.[46] Indeed the Worm is "a crawling shape," but is it not more proper in the context to see a weird representation of Death in the Conqueror Worm? As a further evidence of the validity of the contention one may cite "Premature Death," where it is without doubt a symbol of Death.

When "Ligeia" first appeared in the *American Museum,* the passage, beginning with *At high noon* including the poem and the two following paragraphs, was written in a far inferior form, in which the Glanvill quotation occurred in the narrator's mind, and was not uttered by the heroine. It is well known that Poe was an inveterate reviser, but this was certainly one of those cases where emendation brought about a most dramatic success.

The concluding passages of "Act One," which are to be read in conjunction with the end of "Act Two" and that of "Act Five," contain seeds which are to sprout into full growth in the fertile soil of the narrator's mind.

In "Act Two" the scene is shifted to "one of the wildest and least frequented portions of fair England." As for the narrator, he confesses that he has become "a bounden slave in the trammels of opium."

Two reasons might be given for the vice with which the narrator is tainted. One is a great pain under which he labors. It seems to have been the case with Poe himself, who, according to J. M. Robertson, "used opium for the relief of mental pain,"[47] though it was mostly alcohol that he used as nepenthe in his care-ridden life. A second, and more important reason for the hero's drug-habit is to be found in the creation of such circumstances as will not offend the reader's sense of fitness for the "imaginative." It is for this reason that the description of "wild" scenes is accompanied by the following: "I was wild with the excitement of an immoderate dose of *opium,*" or "I forbore to speak to her of a circumstance which must, after all, I considered, have been but the suggestion of a vivid imagination, rendered morbidly active by the terror of the lady, by the *opium* and by the hour." (Italics

are mine.)

Another device contrived for the creation of fitting circumstances is the gloomy and dreary grandeur of an abbey with its gorgeous and fantastic inner decoration, which is in keeping with "the strange and mystical" that is going to be enacted in the chamber.

The bride whom he married "as the successor of the unforgotten Ligeia" is called Lady Rowena Trevanion, of Tremaine. The name, which somehow reminds me of Christabel's Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine, may suggest in a subtle way that the locality where the narrator settled down was somewhere in Cornwall. The hate which is reciprocated by the newly-weds is in sharp contrast with Ligeia's love which was not returned with deserving ardor. Hence intense regret for his lost love and the use of opium to deaden his pain. It is to be noticed that, when the curtain falls on the Second Act, the narrator is in a mood to accept as well as to wish for Ligeia's conquest of death through her gigantic will.

In the next act, the sounds and motions, which should rather be perceived by the narrator with his wild longing to restore the dead to life, are made to be seen and heard by Rowena. This description, together with the narrator's confession that he cannot believe all that he tells Rowena to persuade her, ascribing everything to outer circumstances, is a skillful representation of the narrator's subconscious feeling of Ligeia's presence. When the bounds of "reality" are passed with the hero's sight of the shade of a shadow, and of three or four drops of a brilliant and ruby-colored fluid, this is ascribed to the suggestion of imagination rendered morbidly active rather than to the unseen agency of Ligeia. This is not the place in which to dwell on Poe's use of color-words, but it would seem to me that "*red*" was nearly always associated in his mind with "*blood*," which, for obvious reasons, was to him indissolubly connected with *death*.

In the rest of the story the same kind of technique is exploited for verisimilitude. When a sob startled the narrator from his reverie, he "*felt* that it came from the bed of death." His first reaction, on being aware of some vague sound coming from the region of the bed, was "could it be possible?" At the sight of a tremor upon

the lips of the corpse, he felt that his "reason wandered."

By imperceptively slow degrees there is a growing belief on the part of the narrator in the survival of the lady. It is to be noted that hints are dropped that what he actually wishes for is the "resurrection" of Ligeia rather than that of Rowena. The transition from doubt about to belief in Ligeia's revival takes place in the narrator's mind. And "she who had been dead" which replaced "the corpse of Rowena" in the earlier version is a highly clever emendation to intimate to the reader that the narrator is now more convinced of her coming revival.

As for the reason why the narrator can recognize things beyond the scope of the physical senses, Professor Basler [48] would seem to ascribe everything, while the editor of the Oxford Companion to American Literature ascribes only part of what happens in the Fifth Act, to hallucination. But it seems to me that Poe meant that the narrator is in a sort of hypnotic condition through Ligeia's gigantic volition. Near the end of the story he may be said to be in the state of "sleep-wake," which, according to Poe, enables one to see everything which a spirit performs. (See P. 14.) What is noteworthy in this connection is that Poe, living in the heyday of orthodox mesmerism, has the operator induce artificial sleep without the aid of magnets and merely by the operator's volition as is evidenced in his tales of mesmerism. Furthermore there is reason to believe that in "Ligeia" Poe showed himself a forerunner of James Braid, an English surgeon, whose conception of "hypnotism" as expressed in "Neurypnology or Nervous Sleep" published in 1843 was that it was based on the subjective psychological reaction of the person who is hypnotized.

And here it will not be out of place to speak a word about the position the reader occupies in relation to the narrator. Professor Warren says that it is impossible for the reader to identify himself with the hero of the story. [50] My personal opinion is that, if the story is to be appreciated, one must try to identify himself with the narrator, whether the narrator is a neurotic as Professor Warren says, or is mentally deranged as insisted on — wrongly it seems to me — by the editor of the Oxford Companion to American Literature.

About the description used in the concluding passages, Poe admitted that "the

gradual perception of the fact that Ligeia lives again in the person of Rowena is a far loftier and more thrilling idea than the one I have employed."[51] The question is whether or not enough has been done to bring about in the reader that "willing suspension of disbelief which constitutes poetic faith." And after what has been done, some readers would rather prefer the wild rush which was actually employed by Poe.

III

The personal life of Poe, which he once likened to roaming on "desperate seas," was indeed an eventful voyage. He was only three when he lost his mother, and his father had disappeared, no one knows exactly where or why. On one of the rare occasions when he referred to them, he wrote, "I have many occasional dealings with Adversity — but the want of parental affection has been the heaviest of my trials."[52] Taken into the home of John Allan, he was never legally adopted. Partly through Allan's lack of understanding of the young poet, and partly through Poe's own "many follies,"[53] the complete severance of their unstable relationship finally came in 1833. In the meantime, Mrs. Mary Stanard, his first ideal love, died of mental alienation in 1824. His courtship of Miss Sarah E. Royster came to an abrupt end when she married a certain Mr. Shelton. Mrs. Allan, who loved him as "her own child,"[54] died in 1829. Under these circumstances the blow that the break of their relationship brought to him was so heavy that he "nearly succumbed to its influence, and yielded to despair."[55] Fortune, which seemed to smile on him when he obtained the editorship of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, was soon to frown at him. His erratic nature did not keep him long in a similar position which he occupied on the *Gentleman's Magazine* and *Graham's Magazine*. The hardships he suffered were such that he cried, "I have been too deeply conscious of the mutability and evanescence of temporal things to give any continuous effort to anything."[56] It was in the same spirit that he declared, "I really perceive that vanity of the human or temporal life about which most men merely prate…"[57] Thus his life was "a scorn of things present in an earnest desire for the future."[58]

It is a foregone conclusion that the immortality of the soul or the survival of the

spirit was of vital concern to him. Who can doubt that "the notion of that identity which at death is or is not lost forever" was to him "a consideration of intimate interest?"[59] In spite of his declaration that "no man doubts the immortality of the soul,"[60] it is more than probable that deep in his heart there lurked a persistent fear that Death was the end of all as he intimated in "The Colloquy of Monos and Una." It seems that this obsession is obliquely proved by the descriptions of premature burial. The depiction of Death as something that is inevitable in "The Masque of the Red Death," or as something which will terrify even a misanthrope in "Silence" is another instance of his ill-concealed effort to allay this haunting specter.

In the meantime his struggle to convince him of the survival of the spirit was kept up by his study of Cousin, Brownson and many other writers. However, with his deepening consciousness that all that abstract arguments could do was to make him only *feel* the immortality of the soul and would never lead to *intellectual* belief for which he craved, he turned to "sleep" and "mesmerism" for the solution of his obsession. It was from the conviction that "by sleep, and its world alone is *Death* imaged,"[61] that he opined those who dream by day "obtain glimpses of eternity, and thrill, in awaking, to find that they have been upon the verge of the great secret."[62] The statement that he conceived "Ligeia" in a dream will be better understood in the light of this pretention. Again in mesmeric state, Poe thought, one is in a condition where the phenomena bear close resemblance to death. A mesmerized person "employs only with effort, and then feebly, the external organs of sense, yet perceives ··· matters beyond the scope of physical organs."[63]

The same belief is expressed in a letter to Lowell, in which he says, "At death, the worm is the butterfly, but of a matter unrecognized by our organs — recognized occasionally, perhaps, by the sleep-waker, directly — without organs — through the mesmeric medium. Thus a sleep-waker* may see ghosts. Divested of the rudimental covering, the being inhabits *space* ··· passing everywhere and acting all things, by

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* One in a mesmeric sleep, not to be confused with a "sleep-walker"

mere volition … "[64] It is apparently this belief to which he gives artistic expression in "Ligeia."

Thus Poe wrote this story as well as the others fully conscious of what he was writing about. I can not agree with Professor Warren who is of opinion that "In Poe, the division is terrifyingly complete between the unconscious, which provides the obsessive themes of delirium, torture, and death, and the conscious which literarily develops them."[65]

Mme. Bonaparte, as is expected from her determination to see Elizabeth Arnold in Ligeia, asserts — wrongly in my view — that "Every later lover from Frances Allan to Virginia and her successors, would never be other than a reincarnation of his first undying love for his mother — still living in his unconscious — ever to be reactivated by each new passion."[66]

D. H. Lawrence, on the other hand, asserts that "Ligeia" is a love story with Virginia as its heroine.[67] Though it is beyond doubt that Poe placed the love of woman very high as is evidenced, for example, in a passage from the "Poetic Principle,"[68] or where he depicts love which survives death as in "Annabel Lee,"* it seems to me that Ligeia's love for her husband is there as a prerequisite to her "resurrection."

My conclusion is that though "Ligeia" is on the surface "a wild matter" describing Ligeia's temporary possession of Rowena's body, it is not a story of "resurrection" as is often asserted by many critics. And in spite of Poe's own endorsement of Cooke's comment that "Ligeia" was "a tale of 'the mighty will' contending with, and finally vanquishing, Death,"[69] it is my belief that what he really intended was the description of the survival of the spirit. Thus "Ligeia" came into being in his effort to convince him of the immortality of the soul. That this belief was far from being strong is brought to the notice of those who read the letters to Lowell and Chivers[70] in juxtaposition with one to George Bush, an authority on the subject of resurrection. Poe, who is fully convinced of the survival of the spirit in the first batch of letters, is anxious to learn if some thoughts of his in connection with that

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* For further evidence see "The Domain of Arnheim."

subject have any claim to originality, and how far they will strike the scholar as well based.[71] It seems that this self-hypnotism proved a failure and towards the end of his life he came to hold a form of Brahminical faith.* But it is a subject of too wide a scope, and besides it is outside the province of this short study.**

In my scheme of classification of Poe's writings, "Ligeia," with the survival of the spirit as its "latent theme," tops the list of an important group of his tales, including "Morella," "Eleonora," and "The Colloquy of Monos and Una."

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* *According to this faith, death is the absorption by each intelligence of all other intelligences into its own.*

** This will be treated in another paper entitled, "Poe's Conception of Death and Immortality."

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7 Vladimir Ostrov, *Dostoievsky on Edgar Allan Poe* (American Literature, XIV), p. 73.

8 Herbert Read, *English Prose Style* (G. Bell & Sons, Ltd.), p. 136.

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10 *The Works of E. A. Poe*, edited by John H. Ingram (A. & C. Black), Vol. IV, p. 49. Hereafter this will be cited as *Works*.

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31 *Works*, Vol. IV, *Nathaniel Hawthorne*, p. 224.

32 Ibid. Vol. III, *Marginalia*, p. 417.

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37 Marie Bonaparte, *The Life & Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (Imago Publishing Co. Ltd.), Foreword by Sigmund Freud.

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39 D. H. Lawrence, op. cit., p. 79.

40 Arthur H. Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe, A Critical Biography* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.), p. 271.

41 *Works*, Vol. III, p. 17.

42 Ibid. Vol. III, *The Poetic Principle*, p. 217.

43 M. Bonaparte, op. cit., p. 227.

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48 Roy P. Basler, *The Interpretation* of *'Ligeia,'* College English, V (April, 1944), pp. 363—372.

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55 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 68.

56 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 257.

57 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 256.

58 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 257.

59 *Works*, Vol. I, *Morella*, p. 389.

60 Ibid. Vol. III, p. 495.

61 Ibid. Vol. II, *The Colloquy of Monos and Una*, p. 203.

62 Ibid. Vol. I, *Eleonola*, p. 364.

63 Ibid. Vol. I, *Mesmeric Revelation*, p. 116.

64 *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 257.

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70 *Letters*, Vol. I, p. 260.

71 Ibid. Vol. I, p. 273.